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ZIONISM

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Meeting June 8, 1936*

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ZIONISM

The Jewish workers and Jewish toilers throughout the capitalist world know from tragic experience the horrors of pogroms and racial persecution. There are some of you here tonight whose fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, were killed by the Czar's butchers in the gangs of the Black Hundreds. There are others of you whose relatives live in constant fear of pogroms and murders in fascist-ridden Poland. All of us know the inhuman barbarity with which the brown pestilence of Hitler fascism is slowly annihilating the Jewish people in Germany.

The Roots of Pogroms

And just as the Jewish workers know about this persecution, so do many of them know that the roots of race hatred, the causes of bloody pogroms, lie not in the evil characters of a few individuals. Pogroms and the pogrom spirit are deliberately whipped up by the ruling classes in the countries where the Jews are persecuted in order to make the Jew the scapegoat for the evils of capitalism. Here in this country we have seen the Ku Klux Klan, and now the infamous Black Legion, grow out of the red baiting and anti-working class policies of the Hearsts and other big capitalists. Jews and Negroes are villified and

persecuted at the direct instigation of the ruling class in its efforts to split the ranks of the toilers and to turn the resentment of the masses away from the capitalists.

This is what we find in capitalist countries where pogroms take place. But Palestine—the subject of our talk tonight—is not Poland. In other words, the situation there is not similar to the situation in Germany or even this country, where Jew-baiting is on the increase.

At first glance this distinction does not seem to hold true. The press plays up the fact that Jews are being attacked and killed. Several score have been killed since the beginning of the disturbances on April 17. Millions in property have been destroyed. The Jews live in a state of panic. Many of them have run away from their homes. The Jews throughout the world have been profoundly stirred by these events and lament the suffering of their fellow Jews in a land to which they turned as a haven from persecution in Europe.

Palestine, a Colony of British Imperialism

And yet the situation in Palestine differs profoundly from the situation that we all know exists in Poland and Germany. In Germany the pogroms against the Jews are an integral part of the suppression of the German people by the fascists, of the exploitation of the toilers and their sacrifice to the interests of the profits of the German capitalists. In Palestine, on the other hand, the killing of a Jew is a phenomenon ac-

companying the struggle of an oppressed people to liberate themselves from the iron heel of British imperialism.

For those Jewish individuals who suffer from assaults, who are killed by infuriated groups of Arabs, whose property is destroyed, it is immaterial from what motives the attacks spring. Yet for us who want to find a way out of the situation and who want to indicate to the masses a correct line of action, the motives and the origins of anti-Jewish attacks, must be clear. We must emphasize that at the bottom of every fascist and semi-fascist attack on the Jews there is nothing but blackest reaction. At the bottom of the present attacks on the Jews in Palestine—no matter how deplorable they are and how painfully they are felt by the Jews of the world—there is a rising revolutionary movement of the oppressed people fighting for its national independence.

Palestine is a colony of British imperialism. In the League of Nations parlance, it is called a "mandate", but the difference between a mandate and a colony is a difference in words, not in substance. In fact, Britain owns Palestine and uses it to serve its own imperialist purposes. Palestine is important for Great Britain, not so much as a source of raw material and cheap labor, but as a strategic military and aerial position, as a gateway to the East. Next to the Suez Canal and Singapore, Palestine is of the greatest importance to Great Britain and Asia. Great Britain secured its "mandate" over Palestine partly because of the Balfour declaration. That

declaration was issued in November, 1917—one year before the termination of the war—promised to the Jews, in case of an Allied victory, “the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people.” At the same time it promised the Arabs “that nothing shall be done which will prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.” It was an ambiguous proposal, obviously incapable of fulfillment, but it won to the side of the Allies a number of Jews throughout the world and it gave to Great Britain that claim to Palestine which made it possible for her to secure it as a colony of British imperialism.

Will Britain Ever Allow a "Jewish National Home"?

Has Britain any intention of ever carrying out its promise? Let us be clear about that. “A National Home for the Jewish People” means either a Jewish state in Palestine or it means nothing. But in Palestine the majority of the population is Arab, there is little likelihood of the Jew ever forming a majority, and, even if such a majority were achieved against the most stubborn resistance of the native Arab population, the Jews would still form an insignificant minority compared with the 12,000,000 Arabs in the adjoining countries (Greater Arabia—stretching from the Mediterranean to the Gulf of Persia). A state of this kind is obviously an impossibility. More-

over, it is not in the interests of British imperialism itself which has to play with the Arab masses in order to protect its own interests in the whole Near East. British imperialism is as little inclined to form a Jewish state in Palestine as it is inclined to form a Pan-Arabian state which it has repeatedly promised to the Arabs.

British imperialism is using the Balfour declaration and its pro-Arab declarations in order to set the Jews against the Arabs and the Arabs against the Jews. This is the old policy of the British conquerors everywhere, "Divide and rule". Split the local population according to origin, religion, race, or any other characteristic; sharpen and deepen these differences so as to have the local population fighting each other instead of unitedly fighting against their chief enemy,—British imperialism.

The Balfour declaration was hailed by nationalist Jews throughout the world as the fulfillment of an age old hope, as the realization of the fondest dreams of Jews driven from land to land during thousands of years. Here they thought was a safe harbor. But a sharp line of distinction must be drawn between Zionistically inclined masses and the Zionist politicians. The shoemaker of Poland, the small merchant of Germany, the Hebrew teacher from Rumania, who unable to endure any more the persecutions in their respective countries, undertake to emigrate to Palestine in the hope of building there a new Jewish life, have, in the main, no idea of conquest. They want to live in peace with

the native population. They want to work, to build.

These people, in their majority, are sincere. Unfortunately, they are pawns in the hands of the Zionist leadership which, beginning with the Balfour declaration, has formed a strong alliance with the British conquerors of Palestine, to carry out their aims under the protection of British bayonets.

What Zionism Cannot Give

The Jewish toilers were promised that they would be given land to work on, in order to turn the arid and swamp lands of Palestine into a "Garden of Eden". But to get hold of this land, the Arab peasants who live and toil on it, have to be driven off. According to Zionist sources, 83 per cent of the land now owned by Jews in Palestine was bought by the Zionist organization from Effendis—the Arab feudal landlords, most of them absentee landlords.

These lands have been cultivated by Arab peasants who paid a certain yearly rental to their masters, but looked upon the land as belonging to them. When the Zionist organization secures such a tract of land, the peasants are ordered off. If they resist, force is used against them. In order to safeguard the Jewish settlements against dissatisfied Arab neighbors who have been driven off their land, the Zionists have organized a special armed force which stands guard day and night. This intrusion into a foreign land and expro-

priation of the native peasants is called by the Zionist leaders the "conquest of the land", in this case an apt slogan. It is conquest. The Zionist leaders come to Palestine not as peaceful settlers, but as conquerors. The conquest could not have been achieved without British imperialism whose interests are served by Zionism and its anti-Arab policies.

Whenever the Jewish settlers, under the direct leadership of the Zionist organizer, have engaged in business activity, they have proclaimed a boycott against the Arabs. It is an established rule that no Jew must engage an Arab. "Racially pure labor" is the slogan of Zionism in the very same way that it is the slogan of Hitler and the Ku-Kluxers and Black Legion here. This policy of Zionism is proudly named the "conquest of labor". These two policies, the conquest of the land and the conquest of labor, are accompanied by a third slogan taken directly from the arsenal of Hearst, "buy Jewish".

Prosperity For Whom?

On the basis of these policies the Zionists boast that they have brought prosperity to Palestine, that they have redeemed a desert land, and in the language of Mussolini, they boast that they have built railroads and brought culture to a backward people. Let us examine what Zionism actually brought to the Arab masses and also to the Jewish masses. The standards of living of both Jews and Arabs are very low. The Jewish workers are getting a meager wage and many are

forced to live in the most unsanitary conditions. The road builders, for example, are subjected to the most cruel exploitation—all in the name of “upbuilding the Holy Land”. In reality they make profits for the Jewish capitalists who see their opportunity in Palestine. Some of the Jewish farmers have turned into real kulaks and they employ mostly Arab labor because it is cheaper. The Arab workers who are not admitted to the Zionist-controlled labor unions, are forced to work at wages even lower than is paid the Jewish workers. The United Hebrew Trades of Palestine, under the leadership of the “Socialist Poale-Zion Party” endeavor to drive even these Arab farm laborers from the Jewish farms and replace them by Jewish workers who would be forced to agree to a wage far below the union scale. In order to achieve this, the Zionist Labor Unions maintain picket lines at the gates of the farms, as they maintain picket lines wherever a Jewish employer, preferring the interests of his profits to his Zionist interests, hires Arab labor.

That prosperity of which the Zionists boast has all the semblance of the prosperity brought by imperialism to all the colonial countries. It is prosperity for the exploiters and increased misery for the exploited. It means outward signs of progress, like roads, railroads, harbors—all necessary for military purposes, and chemical factories, necessary for the production of ammunition. At the same time it means poverty and degradation for the overwhelming majority of the population, Arab and Jewish alike.

Jewish Opposition in Palestine

Are the Jewish masses in Palestine satisfied? There is a left wing among the Jewish workers, which is cooperating with the illegal Communist Party of Palestine and which is advocating unity between the Arab and Jewish toiling masses to fight all exploiters and oppressors, whether Jew or Arab. There is now considerable unemployment in Palestine, which increases the dissatisfaction of the Jewish masses. This unemployment is a direct result of the insane economic policy of Zionism which paid exorbitant prices for land, created an artificial boom, and stimulated production with a view to a foreign market which is non-existent.

Unfortunately, the pressure of the Zionist apparatus, coupled with the armed might of British imperialism, is so strong over the Jewish masses, that their opposition has not found broad enough expression. In this respect as in so many others, the situation of the Jewish masses in Palestine under the Zionist administration which controls every avenue in life, resembles the situation of the masses in fascist countries. No one can enter Palestine without the consent of the Zionist organization, which has introduced a Hebrew literacy test for entrance. No man can find a job without the consent of the Zionist-controlled trade unions. No intellectual can find any position whether in the school system or in the city administration without the consent of the Zionist bureaucracy which works hand in hand with the

British High Commissioner and his agents, the sole rulers of the country. No paper can be published in Palestine which is in opposition to the policies of Zionism. Any attempts made by the left wing to express its opposition legally is met with persecution by the Zionist organization. Zionist spies inform the British police. There are arrests, tortures and as a last resort, deportation.

Arab Movement for National Liberation

If the Jewish masses are to a certain degree dissatisfied with the situation in spite of all the promises made to them of having a Jewish National Home in Palestine, how much more dissatisfied are the Arab masses? There has been developing in Palestine a great movement for national liberation from the British yoke. This movement has been gaining momentum in the last few years. What we have witnessed in the last few weeks is a revolt against British imperialism, taking the form of demonstrations, of a general strike, huge mass meetings and, of late, armed attacks against the British military forces. What is most significant is that Arab policemen in the service of the British government in Palestine refused to shoot down their brothers, the Arab revolutionists.

When a stage is reached where the native police refuse to obey their imperialist masters, this indicates great tension and the wide social basis of the revolutionary movement. Palestine is actually in the throes of an uprising. Even the

New York Times, has admitted that the Arabs are conducting a revolt which threatens British rule. This movement is not isolated and peculiar to Palestine alone. Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia stirred Arab nationalist feelings which found their first expression in mass actions against French imperialism in Syria. The Arabs in Egypt have conducted strong mass struggles against British imperialism. In Transjordan, there were violent demonstrations against British imperialism. The whole Arabian sub-continent is in a state of great ferment. The situation in Palestine is aggravated by the policies of Zionism. The revolutionary movement of the Arab masses is opposed to Zionism in which it sees an ally of their main foe, British imperialism. The national-revolutionary movement of the Arabs cannot agree to the prospect of establishing in Palestine a Jewish state which would be used by British imperialism to dominate the Arab masses. The national-revolutionary movement in Palestine cannot and will not agree to the Zionist program which flaunts in the face of the Arab masses the prospect of a minority State over the native majority. (The idea of the Zionists that they will bring in so many more immigrants in order to form a Jewish majority, is, for the same reasons, equally abhorrent to the revolutionary Arab patriots. Needless to say that this is almost impossible of achievement since the Arabs still out-number the Jews by a 5-2 ratio and since the absorption capacity of the country is extremely limited.)

The General Strike

The breadth of the national movement is obvious from the fact that during seven weeks a general strike has been conducted without any interruption. The workers and farmers are suffering great hardships, but their spirit is unbroken. They are fighting against tremendous odds. The country is in the grip of the military forces. Tanks, armored cars, airplanes, artillery, and battleships are unable to stem the tide of national-liberation. Hundreds of revolutionists have been jailed, many were sent to concentration camps in the desert, but the movement is marching on. More and more it assumes the nature of an armed revolt for independence. It is inevitable that sooner or later this movement should turn against the native exploiters, the feudal landlords. Signs of this are already visible even today. This creates a certain cleavage in the leadership of the national-revolutionary movement. Leaders who represent the feudal landlords and the higher clergy are increasingly flirting with British imperialism, while the more class-conscious elements in the leadership are breaking away from the reactionaries. The movement is still in its initial stages, but its further development is unmistakable. The slogan of the more advanced elements in the leadership is: against British imperialism, against Zionism and against the feudal exploiters. More and more it is being directed, not against the Jewish population, but directly against British Imperialism.

Only Reactionaries are Interested in Attacks on Jewish Lives

Who is interested in killing the Jews? Not the national-revolutionary movement. Not the Arab masses if they understood their interests clearly. Unfortunately there are elements among the Arab masses that are still backward. Incensed by their hatred of Zionism and fired by the propaganda of their reactionary leaders, the representatives of the exploiters and the higher clergy, they fail to distinguish between Zionism and the Jewish masses.

What then should be the program of both the Jewish and the Arab masses in Palestine? It is obvious that in order to forestall the possibility of further attacks on individual Jews, and in order to raise the national-liberation movement to a higher stage, the unity of the Jewish and Arab masses is imperative, if both their fundamental interests are to be safeguarded.

This program is the direct opposite of that proposed by the Zionist leaders on the one hand, and by the reactionary Arab leaders on the other.

The most reactionary Zionist leaders, the Revisionists, are in favor of race warfare. "Jew against Arab under the protection of Great Britain" is their slogan. The most reactionary sections of the Arab leaders, the party of the Mufti (high Mohammedan priests), and of the Arab landlords are equally in favor of race warfare. "Arab against Jew" is their slogan, with a tacit and implied understanding between these

leaders and British imperialism as a check against the masses becoming "too wild." Unity of the Jewish and Arab masses against British imperialism, against Arabian feudalism, against Zionism; a free government in Palestine representing the laboring masses of Arabs and Jews as part of a greater free Arabia in which Palestine forms a federal state and in which the Jews have their rights as a national minority fully guaranteed—this is the program of the most advanced elements of the Arab and national movement. This must be also the program of the Jewish masses in Palestine.

Zionism as Guardian of British Imperialist Interests

The policy of Zionism is harmful. It can serve only to arouse the backward members among the Arab masses against the Jews generally. It serves to make the Jews the scapegoat for British imperialism and for the criminal policy of the Zionist leaders. The Zionist leaders press Jewish youth into the police service of Great Britain to shoot down Arab revolutionary patriots. The Zionist leaders continuously clamor for arms and more arms for Palestine. They protest to the High Commissioner and to the colonial office of the British government that not enough drastic steps are taken against the Arab revolutionists. The Jewish Mayor of the city of Tel-Aviv declares at the height of the general strike against British imperialism that the Jews are proud to be part of the British empire—this was

done at the Levantine fair at Tel-Aviv May 12. The Zionists everywhere attempt to paint the and the whole scope of the movement as directed chiefly against the Jews and therefore being a pogrom movement in the main.

It is these policies of Zionism which are directly responsible for the bloodshed in Palestine. In an interview given with a representative of a Warsaw paper on May 8 by Doctor Goldman, representing the Palestine Jewish Agency at the League of Nations, the latter, important leader of Zionism, declared:

“Whoever read the reports of the debates in the English Parliament and in the House of Lords can convince himself that the Jewish National Home has many friends there. At any rate, they are extremely pro-Zionist there. This is not only a matter of sentiment, of sympathy for the people of the Bible, but also of concrete selfish interests. Today every English political leader understands already that the vital nerve of British interests in the near East, the Suez Canal, must be strongly guarded. And if there were no Jews in the Holy Land, they would have to be brought there.”

The Zionists thus place themselves in the position of guardians of the interests of the British empire. This means guardians of the oppressors of the Arabian colonial people, as well as the Jewish people. This policy can lead only to increased tension between the Arabs and Jews. It will lead to more clashes, more bloodshed.

Reactionary Arab Leaders

Similarly, the policy of the reactionary extreme wing of the leadership of the national liberation movement, which sees eye to eye with British imperialism and which is interested in diverting the stream of the mass movement from British imperialism and from themselves to the Jews, can only increase the tension between Jews and Arabs. Reactionary nationalism on the one side and reactionary Zionism on the other side, turn Palestine into a battleground of Jew-Arab warfare, which is against the interests of both peoples.

Against this, the more advanced leaders of the Arab national liberation movement proclaim the unity of the Jewish and Arab masses and the necessity for a struggle both against British imperialism and Arab feudalism. Thus, the leader of the Radical Nationalist Youth, Hamgi Housseini declared early in May:

“The cause of all terroristic acts of recent time is the poverty, the grave position of the fellaheen (tenant-farmer) and the worker, and the heavy pressure of imperialism. Imperialism creates race friction and therewith it diverts the attention from itself as the one that bears the main guilt. The present pressing task of the oppressed masses is to throw themselves into a life and death struggle against the main source of all evils, imperialism, to make an end to the struggle between sections of the country according to nationalities. But this is

possible only if the toilers of both nationalities turn away from the nationalist and capitalist leaders and their capitalist interests."

The Communist Party Program is Peace Between Jewish and Arab Toilers

The Communist Party of Palestine is that organization which consistently strives to build a bridge between the Jewish and Arab masses. The Communist Party of Palestine is against Zionism as a policy which divides the masses of Palestine. The Communist Party of Palestine is against Zionism which has now put itself in the service of suppressing the national liberation movement of the Arabs, which is part of the struggle of the oppressed masses against imperialism on a world scale. The Communist Party of Palestine is for immediate peace between the Jewish and Arab toilers, which by itself will automatically make attacks on individual Jews almost impossible. The Communist Party of Palestine appeals to all the toilers of Palestine to unite with the national revolutionary movement to help it free Palestine from British oppression, to drive out the British imperialists, not only from Palestine but also from all the Arabian lands.

The Communist Party of Palestine is an underground Party. Its members, when seized, and often with the aid of Zionist informers, are subjected to imprisonment, torture and heavy penalties. Over and over again, the Party has been raided and many of its leaders seized. It was

inevitable that in certain instances when no central Party control was possible, an error should creep into one or another Party leaflet. This was the case with a proclamation issued last fall where the class line was not clearly drawn and where a number of nationalist expressions crept in. But the Party speedily corrected this error. The Party is developing, both in strength and in ideological clarity. The slogans of the Party are correct. The slogans of the Party are Unity of Arab and Jewish masses against British imperialism as the main enemy, against Zionism as an ally of British imperialism, and against the feudal landlords.

The Vicious Fable of "Communists Inciting to Pogroms"

A great deal of malicious gossip is being peddled around by the Jewish press and by the Zionist agencies to the effect that the Communist Party of Palestine is "inciting the Arabs to anti-Jewish pogroms." The conclusive answer is that where the Communist Party leads the government, in the Soviet Union, it abolished the worst pogrom-makers and the worst anti-Semitism ever known, and won complete equality for the Jews. The worth of such accusations is obvious from the very fact that the Communist Party appeals for unity between the Jewish and Arab toilers. As a matter of fact, the Communist Party is the only organization which is consistently striving to put an end to attacks on the Jews in Palestine. The Communist Party realizes that such attacks

only serve reaction. The growth of the Communist Party will be the best guarantee against a repetition of such harmful attacks.

But at the same time the policy of the Communist Party is consistent with the principles of class struggle and with internationalism when it fights against the policies of Zionism. The Communist Party is working in a people's front with the left wing of the national liberation movement. It demands the stopping of Zionist immigration into Palestine. Immigration under the auspices of an organization pledged to fight the battles of imperialism against the native revolutionary liberation movement cannot be defended. Immigration under the auspices of Zionism is selective immigration for the purpose of imperialist colonization. Such a policy is against the best interests both of the Jews and the Arab masses in Palestine. The Communist Party further demands that the sale of land to Zionist agencies be stopped. This too is a democratic demand. Driving the Arab toilers off the land to make room for an undertaking which admittedly aims at imperialist conquest, cannot be defended from a democratic point of view. The Communist Party maintains that the settlement of the Jews on land in Palestine as well as the entrance of Jewish toilers into Palestine must be decided upon, not by the British rulers who use both as a means to further their predatory interests in Palestine and in the Near East, nor by the Zionist leaders who are committed to British imperialist policies, but by the consent of a joint

committee composed of both Arab and Jewish toilers in Palestine. This is one of the many ways in which the problem of Jewish immigration and settlement on the land can be solved.

Immigration, But Not Conquest

The argument has been advanced that these demands of the Communist Party mean closing the one country to which Jews who are forced to leave Germany or Poland or Rumania, can come. We understand fully well the sentiment of the Jews in the face of oppression. We know how many of the oppressed Jews would wish to run away from the land which turned out to be a land of torture for them. But this does not mean that Palestine can be the refuge it is reputed to be by the Zionist leaders. There is no salvation for the Jews in Palestine. Taking Jews out of the hell of Hitler Germany or pogroms in Poland and bringing them to Palestine to serve as pawns in the imperialist game of Great Britain, what's more, to serve as cannon-fodder for the defense of British imperialist interests in race warfare against native Arab revolutionists, is not the way to solve the problem of the Jews. The problem of the Jews will be solved by the revolutionary struggle of the Jewish masses shoulder to shoulder with the workers and toilers of each country, for the overthrow of fascism, for the defeat of reaction, for the establishment of the fundamental rights of the masses. This is what the Communist Party strives for in every country in the world. And only this is the

real answer to the needs of the Jews in Germany, Poland, Rumania, and wherever they are persecuted and oppressed. The Soviet Union shows that this is the one way of solving the Jewish question.

Zionism is obviously in a state of catastrophe. The promises so lavishly made to the Jewish masses cannot be fulfilled. The dream of a Jewish state is further away than it has ever been. The Zionist leaders are making the Jewish settlement serve reactionary aims. All this is bound to unmask Zionism in the eyes of the Jewish people everywhere. Zionist leaders will not admit this openly, although they are fully aware of the grave crisis in which their undertaking finds itself. They stand accused in the eyes of the masses. In order to divert the attention of the Jewish masses from their own harmful policies as revealed so clearly by the events in Palestine, they have launched an attack on the Communists of Palestine, and also on the Communists in the United States.

The Stand of the Communists in U.S.A.

The Communist Party of the United States is advocating a policy of peace between the Arab and Jewish masses in Palestine. The Jewish Bureau of the Communist Party has worked out a program to approach the solution of this problem. It contains, first of all, the renunciation of the Zionist policy of conquest, and the declaration that the Jewish masses are ready to fight hand in hand with the Arab masses against

British imperialism. As a concrete realization of this program the Jewish Bureau proposes that the trade unions in Palestine stop their discrimination against Arab workers and admit them and organize them on an equal footing with the Jewish workers. The picketing of the places of Arab employment should be abolished. Arab tenants should be organized together with Jewish tenants. Selective immigration under Zionist auspices should be abolished, with the understanding that a means of popular control over immigration should be found. The sale of land should be permitted only with the consent of those who live on it and till the land.

These are demands that should appeal to every worker and toiler in the United States. They are just demands. They are demands that will advance the cause of the exploited in Palestine and with it the cause of the exploited throughout the world.

The future of Palestine, like the future of every colonial country, is that of liberation from the imperialist yoke and the establishment of a farmers and workers government opposed to feudalism, and carrying out basic reforms on behalf of the workers and farmers. It is towards such a future that the Jewish masses both in Palestine and in other countries must look. It is this future which is indicated by the revolutionary movements in every part of the world, which will secure freedom and peace to all the oppressed nationalities of the world including the Jewish people.